

UNCERTAINTY—THE ENEMY OF JOB CREATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

With the United States unemployment rate steadily hovering around 10 percent, Americans are continuing to ask, "Where are the jobs?" The response to this jobless crisis from congressional Democrats and the Obama administration seems to be focused on higher taxes, increased government spending, and more government mandates and regulation. All of this has led to great uncertainty in the business community, especially among small businesses which employ over half of all private sector employees.

In a recently released letter, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce explains how the current policies of the administration and congressional Democrats are not working. The high spending and high tax agenda has created an atmosphere of uncertainty. As the Chamber's letter correctly states, "Uncertainty is the enemy of growth, investment, and job creation. Through their legislative and regulatory proposals—some passed, some pending, and others simply talked about—the congressional majority and the administration have injected tremendous uncertainty into the economic decision-making process and business planning. This is why banks are reluctant to lend and why American corporations are sitting on well over a trillion dollars. It is why America's small businesses and entrepreneurs, the engines of innovation and job creation, are starving for capital and are either struggling to survive or simply unable to expand. In the process, we are also eroding our competitive position globally, as other nations take steps to cut taxes, reduce regulations, and restrain the appetites of big government. For all of these reasons, the known and unknown costs that come with expanding operations and adding to payrolls in the United States are simply perceived to be too high."

As the Chamber's letter highlights, the continued expansion of the Federal Government into all areas of our economy is stunting economic growth and prohibiting private sector job creation. The Democrats' congressional agenda includes one piece of job-killing legislation after another. The new health care law includes thousands of expensive and burdensome mandates and hundreds of billions of dollars in business taxes and penalties. It contains thousands of pages of new regulations to be followed by individuals, employers, health care providers and States.

The House passed climate change bill, the cap and trade bill, would create nearly 1,500 new regulations and mandates and carry a price tag of well over a trillion dollars, according to the Chamber. Furthermore, the Environmental Protection Agency is engaging in an unprecedented level of regulatory

action by moving forward with 29 major economic rules and 173 major policy rules.

The list keeps going. The recently passed financial regulatory reform legislation creates 243 new formal rule-makings by 11 different Federal agencies, 47 studies and 74 reports. It is really no wonder American businesses are hesitant to expand and hire.

In addition to the regulatory uncertainty, the Federal Government's appetite for spending needs to be controlled. American families and small businesses are simply making tough choices in this economic climate but Federal spending continues to soar. The Federal Government is spending \$31,000 per household, the highest ever, and running up a \$1.5 trillion deficit in 2010, the largest deficit since the end of World War II.

Recent yearly budget deficits have reached unprecedented levels, accounting for 11 percent of the GDP. By comparison, the historical average budget deficit is only 2.9 percent of the GDP. In 2008, publicly held debt as a percentage of the GDP was about 21 percent, nearly five points below the post-war average. Under President Obama's budget, this figure would more than double to 90 percent of the GDP by the year 2020. This continued structural debt poses serious economic risks to this country. As the Chamber's letter notes, "By crowding out available capital for business expansion and eventually triggering increases in interest rates and inflation, rising deficits and debt add to uncertainty, inhibit growth, and smother job creation."

The way out of this recession and toward job creation is to get Federal spending under control and enact policies that free up capital and encourage businesses to grow. We need to reduce uncertainty and restore confidence in our economy. We cannot do this if the administration and congressional Democrats continue to impose more and more burdensome mandates and increase taxes on job creators. It's time to reduce the unnecessary meddling of the Federal Government and let the American entrepreneurial spirit flourish.

THE 9/11 HEALTH AND COMPENSATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, for too long the heroes and survivors of the 9/11 attacks have struggled to receive the health care and compensation that they need and deserve. They came to Ground Zero to aid in America's recovery. Now we must aid in their recovery.

After 8½ years of hard work, we are closer than ever to passing H.R. 847, the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. The bill, which would provide health care and compensation, is nearing consideration on the House floor next week.

But another tragedy threatens the health of cleanup workers. The warnings from 9/11 must be heeded as crews restore the gulf after the BP oil spill.

I urge my colleagues to remember and support those who aid our country in time of need. They were there for us; we must be there for them, with their health care and with support.

STOP THE DROP HOUSES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of bipartisan legislation I introduced yesterday with my colleague Congressman Brian Bilbray: the Stop the Drop Houses Act.

The Federal Government's failure to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system has allowed smugglers and Mexican cartels to set up vast networks of drop houses, which operate as way stations for criminal enterprises. In Phoenix we have as many as 1,000 drop houses. They are dangerous magnets for violent crime.

Even more alarming is the fact that a loophole in Federal law prevents authorities from using civil forfeitures to seize these houses. Authorities can seize vehicles or even airplanes, but they can't use civil forfeiture against the actual drop house itself. The Stop Drop Houses Act would close the loophole and allow authorities to use civil forfeitures to seize these drop houses.

Obviously it will take much more to fix our broken system, but this is one obvious and important step that Congress can take right now to make our communities safer.

I urge my colleagues to pass the Stop the Drop Houses Act.

EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is critical to our economic recovery to extend unemployment benefits for several more months and assist struggling States and local governments so that they can avoid layoffs of teachers, police officers, firefighters, and others.

Right now there are 15 million out-of-work Americans who are waiting on the Senate to extend unemployment benefits, which contribute to paying mortgages, health care, utility bills, and the cost of food. The Democratic unemployment bill would provide unemployment checks averaging about \$300 to people whose 26 weeks of State-paid benefits have run out. The benefits would be extended through the end of November.

We know these benefits not only are a much-needed lifeline for jobless Americans and their families. They also provide a proven boost to our struggling economy.